

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 30, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

As the United States Department of Agriculture continues its reorganization efforts, we ask that you continue consideration in bringing USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) projects to Ames, Iowa.

In conjunction with the mission of bringing federal agencies closer to constituents, Iowa serves as a prime location with its unmatched production of food and fuel. Our state has 35.7 million acres of land, more than 85% of which is used for agriculture. Iowa is a national leader in the production of corn, soy, swine, beef, biofuels, and more.

Located in Ames, Iowa State University (ISU) works closely with the USDA, providing the agency with high-performance computing services to federal researchers. Several students and professors at Iowa State prioritize their work and research with the USDA, many joining the agency after their time at ISU.

Ames currently has one of the largest concentrations of USDA facilities and employees outside of Washington, D.C. The ARS National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment (NLAE), ARS National Animal Disease Center (NADC), ARS North Central Regional Plant Introduction Station (NCRPIS), and ARS Corn Insect and Crop Genetics Research Unit (CICGRU) are all currently based in Ames. It's also home to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NSVL) and the APHIS Center for Veterinary Biologics (CVB). This advances the city's preparedness, minimizing transition complications for other ARS projects like those studying plant sciences, animal health, and the environment.

Further, many of the studies conducted at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center align with Iowa State University and the Agricultural Research Service's efforts including, soybean genomics, hydrology and remote sensing, animal genomics, animal biosciences and biotechnology, adaptive cropping systems, and bee research.

Not only would Iowa benefit on the research front, but employees would be able to own homes and enjoy the lower cost of living. Iowa falls 10.3% below the average cost of living and ranks the 2nd lowest for grocery prices in 2025.

As the heart of our nation and a leading agriculture producing state, Iowa brings firsthand knowledge and real-world experience to the USDA. To put it simply, Iowa knows agriculture and would contribute unparalleled opportunities for the agency.

We, the Congressional Delegation of Iowa, urge you to bring USDA ARS projects to Iowa's fields to benefit farmers, producers, and families nationwide.

Thank you for your consideration to strengthen the USDA and its service to Americans through the relocation of essential research projects to the heartland of agriculture.

Sincerely,



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Zach Nunn
Member of Congress



Mariannette J. Miller-Meeks,
M.D.
Member of Congress



Kimberly Reynolds, Governor
State of Iowa